

J A N U A R Y 2 0 1 4

CARDEROCK SPRINGS COMMUNITY NEWS

Carderock Springs Community Calendar

(All events are at the Club unless otherwise noted)

Date/Day

Jan 21, Tuesday

Time

2:00-3:30

Event

Aging Well in Carderock: Sharing ideas, services, and tools. Bring your favorite idea to share.

Save the Date

Feb 9, Sunday

TBA

Community Pot Luck to Welcome 2013

Newcomers

Feb 18, Tuesday

2:00-3:30

Writing a Memoir: Why write one, what to include and tips to get you started. Presenter: Sara Taber.

DO IT NOW

I have been asked to write a summary of the talk I gave to the Senior Group on the topic of getting one's affairs in order NOW while we are healthy and capable. Since I'm home today feeling really sick (thankfully, can't remember the last time), I thought it would be a good opportunity to reflect on dying and death. The way I feel, I had better check to see if my own affairs are complete.

Let me begin with a story I have seen played out over and over again in my hospice work. Mrs. A suddenly dies. She has not made known any wishes concerning her body, funeral/memorial plans, distribution of properties, etc. So, the family members, in the midst of their grief, now have to second guess her wishes. What would mom have wanted? Unfortunately, this often leads to family disagreement: one daughter wants Mrs. A to be cremated, while a son wants her body to be buried. Before long, resentments dominate at a time when families should be there for each other. After the funeral, it is not uncommon for some family members to discontinue contact with others.

Most of this could have been prevented if Mrs. A had written down and discussed with her family what she wanted at the end of her life. Not only would it have avoided most family conflict, but Mrs. A would have had what SHE wanted instead a family guess.

I would also suggest that making such decisions and having a conversation with the family does not need to be a depressing thing. In fact, I think when you read the particulars below, you'll see it can offer a lot of meaning and joy to one's life. I have also coined a phrase that I think can offer us a new perspective of truly living a meaningful life in the light of our inevitable dying process and death: "**Today is the last day of the rest of your life**".

So...here is a list of things I think we all need to do NOW!:

PRACTICALITIES:

1. Fill out the Maryland Advance Directive form (MOLST) and put it on your refrigerator or put a note on the refrig as to where the form can be found. When EMT's come to a person's home, that's the first thing they look for. You can get copies of the MOLST form by going on line to <http://www.advdirc.com/>. There is another "form" entitled "Four Wishes" which I think offers a great vehicle for family discussion. This can be gotten by going to the web site <http://www.ageingwithdignity.org/>

2. Make decisions and discuss with family what you want at the time of death. Cremation or burial, funeral home or cremation service only, funeral/memorial service. Some people also find meaning in writing their own obituary. Also, decide where you want to die – at home with hospice care or at the hospital/nursing home, etc.

3. Write a will with the specifics of distributing your assets. I might add that you don't need to die before assets are distributed. Some people get a lot of meaning out of watching how their money is helping with a college education or buying a new house. Make sure all your official papers are in order and easily assessable. Now that a lot of people are doing things like banking on line, make sure there is a way for some trusted person to get your passwords after your death.

4. Appoint someone you trust to be your power of attorney (for finances) and healthcare power of attorney (for medical decisions). Each can only take on these responsibilities when you can no longer make decisions yourself or you choose to hand the roles over to them. There are pros and cons for appointing the same person or two different people for each "attorney". However, it is suggested having only one person to be power of attorney and one for healthcare power of attorney (rather than two power of attorneys, etc.)

RELATIONSHIPS:

The biggest regret people have on their death bed is the wish they had spent more time with those they loved. I don't think I've ever heard someone say, "I wish I had spent more time at work." So....if today is the last day of your life, then get together with your family and friends and spend time together.

I would also suggest doing the following:

1. Who needs to know you love them and what they mean to you? Tell them now, because it will come across as an "I love you". Wait until you are dying, it translates more into a "good bye".

2. Who needs to be forgiven or who needs to forgive you? Sadly, reconciliation often happens around the death bed, giving the estranged people only a day or two to spend together. If you reconcile now, chances are you will have many happy years together.

HEALTH:

Obviously, to lead a healthy, happy life, we all need to do what is necessary to stay healthy. We know the usuals – eat well and exercise. And it is important to do things like stop smoking before you have stage 4 lung cancer, loose weight before you have a heart attack, drink in moderation so your liver and heart are not damaged. Even think about simple things like being attentive to your walking in order to avoid falls. Do I do all these things myself? I try, with some successes and some failures. The point is to keep at it – NOW.

SELF-REFLECTION:

What things, people, events, work, travel, memories have brought you a sense of meaning and purpose in your life? This is an important question because it is a basic (existential) human need that one's life means something, especially to one's own self. Some specific questions:

1. What has my life meant to me?
2. What has my life meant to others?
3. What positive difference(s) have I made in my life?

I encourage people to sit down with children and grandchildren to share your answers. It is an oral autobiography. Often using (and labeling) pictures is helpful. And even better, write down your stories.

SPIRITUAL:

Again, one regret I often hear as someone is dying is they never spent time to reflect on spiritual matters. What do you believe or not believe, especially in terms of what happens after death? Many have found comfort and strength in the answers they have come up with. For some, a formal religion is important; for others, it is more about spirituality. In any case, it might be important for you to think about these things NOW, especially if you come to a better place of peace and acceptance of death as a part of the life process.

AND FINALLY, YOUR BUCKET (TO DO) LIST

While we are healthy and capable, there are still things we might want to do that we haven't done yet. What are they? And, MORE IMPORTANTLY, WHEN are you going to do them? Just having a wish list won't get anything done. We need to also find the time to actually do what is on the list, then do it.

I would suggest that doing the above can offer one other important benefit in addition to giving life more meaning. It can bring us to a place of no or few regrets when we enter the dying process. In palliative studies, this is referred to as a "good death". I would add that it is a peaceful death.

In Dicken's Christmas Carole, Scrooge is confronted by the ghost of Jacob Marley. Marley is condemned to roam the world and not pass over to the other side. Scrooge asks why? Marley's response: "Not to know that any human spirit working kindly in its little sphere, whatever it may be, will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness. Not to know that **no space of regret can make amends for one life's opportunity misused!** And such was I! Oh ! Such was I."

I hope this has been useful. If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at pmrbthmd@yahoo.com. *Phil Rider*

CSCA Social Program Co-ordinator Needed

The CSCA Board is now looking for someone (or possibly two people) to chair/co-chair the Social Program Committee. If you are interested, please contact Phil Rider at pmrbthmd@yahoo.com.

***** January 2014 Senior Program

Tuesday Afternoon Jan. 21, 2014, 2:00-3:30 p.m.

**Aging Well in Carderock: Share ideas, services and tools to age well in our homes.
Bring your favorite ideas to share.**

February

Tuesday Afternoon Feb.18, 2014, 2:00-3:30 p.m.

**Writing a Memoir: Why write one, what to include and tips to get you started
Presenter: Sara Taber.**

Sara is a well-known and beloved teacher at The Writer's Center in Bethesda. She was the William B. Sloane Fellow in Nonfiction at Bread Loaf Writer's Conference and her memoir, Born Under an Assumed Name: The Memoir of a Cold War Spy's Daughter has received much acclaim.

The Senior Program is designed to help Carderock seniors age well by connecting them with their neighbors, offering opportunities to volunteer, and with programs to expand their minds

The Carder-Eco Column

Cold-Weather Compost



The sight of steam rising from a [compost pile](#) on a cold winter day is sure to warm the heart of every [organic gardener](#). It's a sign that when spring comes, you'll have a batch of fresh compost to use for getting seeds and transplants off to a healthy start in your garden. Frigid weather outside can slow the decomposition process, but you can maintain an essential core of heat, which indicates that crucial microbial activity is occurring inside the pile.

"The outside layer of the pile will be ambient temperature," says Mark Van Horn, a researcher at the University of California-Davis, "but if things are right, the inside of the pile will be hot." These hints from the experts we spoke to will help keep your compost cooking through winter in any region.

Microbe Management

Even in winter, a [compost pile](#) is alive, an ecosystem in flux. "Microorganisms such as bacteria, fungi, and actinomycetes account for most of the decomposition activity in a compost pile," explains Dave Wilson, research agronomist at the [Rodale Institute](#). The microbial action in decomposition is exothermic, which means that heat is a by-product of the chemical process of breaking down the material.

The microbes' metabolism slows down as the temperature dips, which explains why food keeps in a refrigerator or freezer. In winter, your goal is to create an ideal habitat for microbes. Think of it as "micro-husbandry."

Feeding. Microbes need a balanced diet, a mix of [carbon- and nitrogen-rich materials](#) (also

known as "browns" and "greens"). Your kitchen scraps, such as vegetable and fruit peelings, coffee grounds, and houseplant trimmings are handy sources of nitrogen-rich ingredients. You can also compost eggshells and even domestic waste products like shredded newspaper. Manure from [chickens](#) or rabbits is loaded with heat-generating nitrogen. If you don't have access to that, you can add alfalfa pellets (sold as rabbit food) or blood meal to give your pile a nitrogen boost.

[Turn kitchen scraps into super-fertile soil! Learn more.](#)

For carbon-rich ingredients, use straw, fallen [leaves](#), shredded newspaper, or sawdust. You can toss in small amounts of ashes from your fireplace or woodstove, which also enhance the calcium, phosphorus, and potassium content of your finished compost.

Particle size. Help chilly, sluggish microbes by doing some of the work for them—chop or shred both browns and greens before adding them to the pile. Tamara Listiak of the Texas A & M Cooperative Extension recommends shredding the material into pieces smaller than 2 inches. The pile heats up uniformly, and the small particles form a kind of mat that shields the pile's warm core from outside temperature extremes, she explains.

Layering. During warm periods, you can just add ingredients to your compost pile as they become available. But in the cold season, take time to add layers of brown ingredients to your green materials. The layers help insulate your pile, trapping heat and gases inside.

Moisture. Winter winds and low humidity can suck the moisture out of your compost pile. The microbes need moisture to survive. During warm spells, water the pile. Leave it damp, but not soaking.

Fresh air. In warm weather, frequent turning is the best way to keep microbes well supplied with oxygen. But in winter, you want to cause as little disturbance as possible to the layer of insulation. Wait until spring to turn the pile.

[Turn kitchen scraps into super-fertile soil! Learn more.](#)

Outside Insulators

While your pile is cooking inside, you can boost its external temperature, too.



Solar power. Where winter is long and frigid, site your compost pile in full sun.

Snowbound. A long-lasting blanket of snow insulates compost from deep freezes, but it can inhibit thawing. Leave it on piles to which you are not adding new material; scrape it off when you put on a fresh layer.

Tarp trap. Covering your pile with a canvas or plastic tarp prevents heat and moisture loss more effectively than a layer of snow. Just remember to add water to the pile regularly when you've shielded it from natural sources.

Bale out. Pack straw bales around your bin or pile for another layer of protection from wind and cold.

In the pits. Dig a trench and fill it with compost ingredients to use the ground's stored heat as an insulating buffer.

Homemade Insulated Composter

1. Using a sharp utility knife, cut the bottom out of a plastic trash can.
2. Poke or drill holes around the sides of the can, 6 to 12 inches from the top, for ventilation.
3. Dig a 1-foot hole and sink the can into it.
4. Insulate the aboveground part of the can with straw bales, packing dried leaves into the gaps.
5. Put a few scoops of soil or compost in the bottom, and layer brown and green ingredients as

they become available. Keep the lid tightly closed between additions.

Turn kitchen scraps into super-fertile soil! Learn more.

New for your e-reader or tablet: [Compostology 1-2-3](#).

Source URL: <http://www.organicgardening.com/learn-and-grow/cold-weather-compost>

Diane Karlik, Environmental Committee

Classified

Cabin John Dog Walking: Midday walks to keep your pets happy and healthy. Many happy Cabin John and Carderock pet owners and their pets will happily give their recommendations. Call Carolyn at 240-204-2953.

Handyman: Jose Louis will help with any and all chores in and around the house and garden, including painting, drywall, carpeting and indoor repairs, carpeting and flooring, as well as grass mowing, yard clean up; deck and patio power washing and staining; fence, pathway or platform construction; and any other kind of heavy work, on a reasonable hourly basis. Contact Carderock neighbor Ray at 301-469-0192.

New to Our Neighborhood

Please welcome Noureen Cholan who recently moved into 8324 Fenway Road. Noureen has three grown children and can be reached via email with nkiarch@gmail.com

Mary Lou Shannon, Welcome Chair

Best Wishes for the New Year

Carderock Springs Board Members

Phil Rider
Jack Orrick
Gunnar Tomasson
Bob Stocker
Barbara Ames
Larry Ondrejko
Donna Schwartz
Joe Tobin
Bill Moore
Noëlle F. Lewis
Doug Soe-Lin, Scott Wilets, Ryan Robbins

President
Vice President
Secretary
Treasurer
Membership
Member-at-Large
Member-at-Large
Member-at-Large
Member-at-Large
Newsletter Editor

Residents of Carderock Springs and surrounding areas may join the Citizens Association for an annual due of \$50 for a membership year ending December 31, 2014. Dues and family information for the Carderock Springs telephone directory may be mailed to the Carderock Springs Citizens' Association at P.O. Box 237, Cabin John, MD 20818-0237. Our Association represents the Carderock Springs community and implements its land covenants.